

150
To the Finance, Revenue, & Bonding Committee

Public Hearing April 23, 2015

Senate Bill #1135: An Act Establishing a Sustainable Path for Maintaining the Budget Reserve Fund and Reducing the Effect of Revenue Volatility on the State Budget

Dear Legislators,

Good afternoon. My name is Nancy Minarsky. I have been a Certified Nurse's Aide for over 25 years. I have spent my entire career at Davis Place, a large nursing home located in Danielson.

I urge you to take the steps to provide the necessary and consistent level of revenue that Connecticut needs. By raising more revenue for the next state budget, and with bills like Senate Bill #1135: *An Act Establishing a Sustainable Path for Maintaining the Budget Reserve Fund and Reducing the Effect of Revenue Volatility on the State Budget*, you can help hardworking caregivers like me struggle less so we can focus more on our job of providing quality care.

Like many of my coworkers, I entered the healthcare field because I always wanted to take care of people. As caregivers, we grow relationships with our patients and learn to love them like we love our own family. One of those unsung heroes is here with us in this room. Laurie Novak has worked at Davis Place almost as long as I have. I remember one December years ago Laurie found a patient crying in his chair. He was upset because he was worried he wouldn't be able to spend Christmas with his wife. The two had been married for many decades and this would have been the first time they'd have to spend the holiday apart.

But Laurie didn't think that was right. So she arranged to surprise the patient and his wife by bringing him home for Christmas. Laurie didn't get to spend Christmas with her own family that year. But I think she ended up having the best Christmas of her life: when she brought the resident home, he and his wife and his whole family were crying hysterically.

That was his last Christmas.

The family gave Laurie an ornamental angel that she still puts on her own tree every year to commemorate that happy moment.

You *want* people like Laurie to dedicate their careers to providing this kind of care...but it's becoming increasingly hard to do. Because of cuts due to the lack of funding from the state, we no longer have time to stop and listen to our patients. And with our wages and benefits stagnant for the past several years, it is getting harder and harder to attract loving people like Laurie to work in nursing home care.

I'm speaking here today not simply as a veteran caregiver, but as the family member of a nursing home resident. My 78-year-old mother has been a patient at Davis Place for a year now. My mom didn't ask for Alzheimer's. She didn't ask to be placed in a nursing home. All of her fellow patients are just like her. These patients deserve quality care. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and love.

I'm not sure if you have family members in a nursing home, but I wonder: how would you feel knowing that you're loved one isn't receiving the care they deserve? You can't put a price tag on that.

The budget choices you have ahead of you are challenging, I know. Please do all that you can to ensure we have the full revenue and steady resources we need next year, and for the years to come, to provide the best possible care.

Thank you.